

City of Long Beach Design Review Guidebook



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PREFACE

In 1992, the City of Long Beach adopted a new zoning ordinance that established a design review rating process. Why? Because the Council and Planning Commission realized that the charm and economic future of Long Beach was directly related to its coastal village look. Thus to encourage new development to fit in and become part of the community, the concept of design review arose. Basic design policies and guidelines for land use zones were included as a part of the zoning ordinance but it was understood that additional detail would be required to facilitate design review. This book of design guidelines is therefore intended to serve as an amplification of the design standards set forth in the zoning ordinance and is to be used in conjunction with the requirements found in the zoning ordinance.

The guidelines are based upon the numerous community meetings held as a part of developing the zoning ordinance. The policies developed during that process are incorporated into this guidelines book. In addition, the City conducted a series of more focused guidelines work sessions, which included members of the Planning Commission, City Council, and interested citizens, to develop the guidelines in this book.

From Discovery Trail at North Head: A Sitka Spruce gracefully points west to the City of Long Beach



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Organization of this Manual

The Long Beach Design Guidelines are grouped into two major areas: The first are chapters that correspond to the character of the land use zones for which the City has adopted design review.

These zones are: Old Town (OT), Old Town West (OTW), Commercial (C1), Shoreline Resort (S3), Shoreline Resort Restricted (S3R), Shoreline Multi-family (S2), Shoreline Single-family (S1), and Single Family Restricted (R1R). Each zone has a expresses design guidelines with photos that apply to all projects in the zone. These photos are meant to be a general guide as to mass, bulk, general architectural characteristics and detailed elements.

The second section is comprised of test guidelines that address the above zones. Test guidelines are organized into sections that correspond to the three different stages of design review in which a project must be considered, as mandated by the zoning ordinance:

First, basic mass and bulk regulations are reviewed. If these are found to be appropriate, **then general architectural characteristics** are considered; if these are also appropriate, **then more detailed elements** of the design are reviewed. This staged review is planned such that an owner will not progress too far on a design without an opportunity to evaluate the project approach with the City.

Throughout each design guideline chapter, the official design guideline statements are listed in numerical order and are printed in bold type. Each of the bold face guideline statements is followed by more detailed information, which is presented as a list of "bulleted" sentences that amplify the interpretation of the design guideline statement itself.

In some cases, the guideline statement itself is prefaced with a statement in italics that describes a significant feature of the neighborhood or establishes a relevant policy that is the basis for the guideline. Illustrative drawings and photos also

accompany the text of many of the guidelines and aid in interpreting the intent of the written statements. These are considered a part of the guidelines as well.



INTRODUCTION

Long Beach has a heritage of diverse architectural styles that reflect the early 1900's beach resort history. Photographs of that era show the main street (Pacific Avenue) bustling with pedestrians, the train, wagons, and early motor cars. Stores were predominately wood frame buildings, usually covered in clapboard siding and they stood close to the sidewalk edge. Many had false fronts that established horizontal parapet lines. As visitors walked along the store fronts, large display windows at the street level exhibited products and attracted and held their attention. Ornamental details, although restrained, were found on many structures, typically around windows and doors, in the ends of gables and along cornices that finished parapet edges.

Along the quieter residential streets, raised wood frame cottages were typical, most sided with clapboards. Front doors were oriented to the street and open porches defined the entrances to most houses. Many roofs extended beyond the walls, and were supported on simple wood brackets. Most windows were rectangular, vertically oriented and framed with flat wood trim. Some houses had picket fences that defined the edges of their front yards.

Beach hotels were a signature piece of the community's resort aspect. Several large frame guest houses, stood along the beach front. Some had fanciful porches with decorative trim made of curvilinear driftwood. Others were more stately turn-of-the-century structures with large, shingled roofs. Upper floors were often tucked into these roofs and most were accented with dormers that gave a sense of scale to the buildings. Most of the hotels had large porches that provided shelter and also defined each building's orientation, usually facing to the ocean. In early photos, these hotels appear set into the sand dunes, with grasses and shore pines serving as the predominant landscape palette.

All of the hotels and guest houses from this early resort era are now gone and the shore line has grown farther west as land has built up from the deposit of sands along the beach. A new foreground of native and introduced plants and rolling sand dunes now establishes the coastal character for which the peninsula is famous.



1900's: Pacific Avenue looking north past the train station and south past the Driftwood Motel

The character of Long Beach today

Today, Long Beach is a blend of new and old. Some of the architectural heritage of Long Beach has been lost, yet many early structures survive and several newer buildings contribute to the relaxed, resort character of the community. Other new buildings, depart from the traditional building character.



October 2000: Downtown Long Beach looking south down Pacific Avenue and across Bolstad Avenue

For example, in outlying commercial areas, more recent buildings are set back from the street in order to accommodate parking areas in front of buildings, and this diminishes the pedestrian-friendly aspect of these retail areas. Some newer hotels now have their front doors facing away from the beach, toward parking lots and a few houses built in recent years have departed from tradition by omitting porches.

Long Beach is dependent on a resort economy and establishing a high quality architectural setting is vital to the economic well-being of its residents as well as the enjoyment of its visitors. At issue is: Will new building and alterations to existing structures weaken the appeal of the community or enhance it?

The quality of development affects the livability of the community. For example, in residential areas we can encourage walking and strengthen the neighborhood oriented character or create auto-oriented sprawl in which neighborhoods are isolated and accessed only by cars. Resort

accommodations can develop as isolated enclaves where visitors stay remote from residents or they can convey a sense of being integrated with local neighborhoods.

Basic design principles for development

These guidelines seek to respond to recent changes in Long Beach and to protect its earlier heritage by helping to integrate functionally and visually all neighborhoods and districts. They set a vision for the future and help to define the character of the community. The guidelines are founded on four basic principles:

1. A sense of visual continuity should be established in each neighborhood and district while also accommodating variety in individual building designs.
2. Natural resources, where they exist, should be respected in development.
3. Neighborhoods and districts should be functionally and visually integrated.
4. Development should help make the city pedestrian-friendly.



New construction reflects the coastal village

The concept of "visual continuity" in the zone districts



In the older, established districts that are subject to design review, the city's goal is to have new construction be compatible with its historic and traditional context. New buildings that are similar in character to those seen in the district historically will be compatible with the established context. This is achieved through the use of similar elements of site design, building form, materials and details. This does not mean, however, that historic styles should be copied. On the contrary,

contemporary interpretations of these traditional styles are encouraged, in order to aid in interpreting the evolution of the city and to encourage variety in building designs.

Respect for natural and scenic features

In the new, accreted lands that are zoned for development, the concern is for development that retains as much of a sense of the natural setting as is feasible. Retaining natural land forms and established vegetation while also promoting recreational opportunities through trails and open spaces are therefore design approaches that are strongly encouraged in these areas.



Discovery Trail winds through the dunes environment

This respect for the natural setting must be balanced with the need to functionally integrate these areas with the older established portions of the city. The concept of compatibility in these areas therefore incorporates a concern for the natural environment as well as the man-made environment.

Connect Districts and Neighborhoods visually and functionally.



Each of the neighborhoods and districts should develop such that all properties in the area have a sense of inter-relatedness. Circulation routes, including auto and pedestrian ways, should connect with a city-wide system and should be designed to function smoothly. In a similar manner, buildings should be sited and designed such that they appear to belong there.



A restored and relocated Tinker House fits in to the surrounding landscape

Make the city pedestrian-friendly

Creating an environment that encourages walking is a primary goal throughout the city. This is vital to the city's interests, because it promotes tourism, which is an essential part of the economy, and reduces traffic congestion. Pedestrian routes, including sidewalks and trails, should be safe and should appear welcoming to persons on foot. Providing building exteriors and streetscapes that are visually interesting to pedestrians is therefore an essential part of this objective.



Pedestrians and cyclists enjoy a warm summer day during Kite Festival

The relationship of design review to the city's zoning ordinance

The city's zoning ordinance clearly stipulates that development in Oldtown (OT), Oldtown West (OTW), Residential (R1R), Shoreline Residential (S1), Shoreline Multifamily (S2), Shoreline Resort (S3), Shoreline Resort Restricted (S3R), and Commercial (C1) is subject to design review. The zoning ordinance also establishes basic standards on development for each land use zone in the city, primarily focusing on setbacks and building heights.

DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR THE OLD TOWN DISTRICT AND OLD TOWN WEST DISTRICT

The Old Town District is the traditional commercial center of Long Beach and continues to be the functional heart of the community. Although it is substantially developed, it will build out even more, with underdeveloped lots increasing in intensity of use. Anticipated uses include retail trade establishments, galleries, offices, restaurants, personal services, theater, amusements, hotels, and parks. Residences may also occur in upper stories. Parking for commercial uses is also expected.



Image desired for the Old Town District

The image desired for the Old Town District is that of an active, pedestrian-friendly village with buildings that reflect a mix of old and new construction, and that convey the character of traditional commercial store fronts seen earlier in Long Beach.

This is because the intent of the Old Town District is to recall the atmosphere of a turn-the-century seashore community, to provide an attractive, compact retail core in order to stimulate foot traffic and to promote tourism. This image is considered the "Early Seashore Theme." This is an image of hand crafted, wood frame structures with a first floor that is predominantly glassed storefront. All buildings in this zone must convey this image.



It is particularly important that this area continue to develop as an attractive area to pedestrians. Development of outdoor areas is encouraged. Creating positive open spaces, will continue to be important for this area, as will preservation of the established corner parks in the town core.



Architectural styles



Although similarity in basic building type is desired, a diversity of the details for treatment of building fronts is to be encouraged; therefore for new construction, a contemporary interpretation of the traditional commercial architecture that is found historically in the area is



desired. In this way, one will be able to read the history of the street by distinguishing new from old while also maintaining a sense of visual continuity. False fronts, marquees, and cedar-shingled siding, along with a moderate amount of architectural ornamentation,

are features that may be included in new building designs to establish a visual link with traditional buildings of the area. An optional, and recommended, feature is the marquee, or horizontal canopy, that provides shelter for pedestrians.

DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR THE COMMERCIAL (C1) DISTRICT

Context



Anticipated Use

All retail uses permitted in the Old Town District. Also light manufacturing and repair and servicing; hospitals and medical clinics; car, boat, mobile homes sales; gas stations, greenhouses; storage, warehouses and wholesale establishments; and RV parks and mobile home parks limited to east side of SR 103. No garbage dumps, auto wrecking yards or junk yards.



Image Desired

A commercial area that is attractive to motorists and pedestrians. The zone should have a sense of being visually related to the commercial core.



Architectural Style

The required architectural style in the CI zone shall be those styles allowed in the Old Town, S1 and S2 zones. In the Commercial District, appropriate architectural styles are the Old Town Early Seashore, Contemporary Northwest Coast, and Seashore. Repeating these styles throughout the area will help to establish a sense of visual continuity. Within

the context of these styles, the creative use of wood as a building tradition is strongly

encouraged.

Avoid imitating historic styles directly. Although the use of similar building elements is encouraged, variety in the manner in which these elements are treated is preferred, in order to create a diversity of building fronts.



DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR THE SHORELINE RESORT DISTRICT

Context

The Shoreline Resort District lies between Boulevard and the shoreline, in lands that have built up over the years from sand deposits. The topography is low, with small dunes and intermittent wetlands. Dune grasses and shore pines give this area a natural, coastal character. Interspersed among the city-zoned properties are state-owned parcels that are retained as natural areas and that contribute to the sense of wildness that is a key to the recreational attraction of this area.





These accreted lands offer an unusual opportunity for the city to provide for new development while also retaining a sense of the natural coastal environment that presently exists. This area, if developed in a manner that establishes a distinct coastal character, can greatly contribute to the city's economic well-being while also enhancing the quality of life for residents and visitors.

Anticipated uses in the Shoreline Resort District include condominiums, motels, restaurants

conference complexes, parks, and retail use (but no amusements, except as reviewed conditionally).

Image desired for the Shoreline Resort Area

The natural coastal land forms and vegetation, along with the views of the ocean, are the primary assets of the Shoreline Resort Area and should be maintained while accommodating appropriate new development. Specifically, the "natural" sand dune character is to be retained. Natural seashore vegetation, including dune grasses and shore pines, therefore, should be maintained, where feasible.



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Public Restroom blends in with the dune landscape in Shoreline Resort



Design goals for the accreted lands

With respect to the accreted lands, these design goals are the basis for the design guidelines:

1. Views to the ocean should be enhanced.
2. Environmental resources should be respected.
3. Landscaping and sensitive site design should be emphasized.
4. Architectural designs should be visually "integrated" within an individual development.
5. All properties should be linked by pedestrian ways.
6. Variety in building designs should be encouraged.
7. Signs should be subordinate to the overall site design.

Architectural character

Although building types similar to those found in Old Town are anticipated in the Shoreline Resort District, their architectural treatment should be distinguishable from Old Town. This is true, even though many uses will be the same as those found in Old Town. For example, buildings should not directly imitate historic commercial buildings. Instead, contemporary interpretations of these traditional building types are preferred.

Architectural styles

In the Shoreline Resort District, appropriate architectural styles are the Old Town Early Seashore, Contemporary Northwest Coast, Seashore and Cape Cod. Repeating these styles throughout the area will help to establish a sense of visual continuity. Within the context of these styles, the creative use of wood as a building tradition is strongly encouraged.

Avoid imitating historic styles directly. Although the use of similar building elements is encouraged, variety in the manner in which these elements are treated is preferred, in order to create a diversity of building fronts. Therefore, simple replication of existing fronts is discouraged.

This means that in the Shoreline Resort District, the Old Town style in its contemporary interpretations, is most appropriate for buildings that are located near sidewalks, in conventional grid settings. Where buildings are set back from the street, or are not oriented on a strong traditional street grid, then the Contemporary Northwest Coast style is the most appropriate design approach.

Imitations of historic styles are expressly discouraged in the accreted lands, where such buildings could not have existed historically. To develop copies of historic buildings in this area would convey a false history for the community.

Landscape design goals

The general site character that is desired is that of natural dunes connected with trails. Development may be more "urban" along the street edges than in the interior of lots. More specifically, the landscape design should be distinctly different from that of Old Town where more "urban" landscaping is appropriate.



The boardwalk allows access to the Shoreline Resort beachfront.

DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR THE SHORELINE MULTI-FAMILY DISTRICT



The Shoreline Multi-Family District lies between Ocean Beach Boulevard and the shoreline, in lands that have built up over the years from sand deposits. The topography is low, with small dunes and intermittent wetlands. Dune grasses and shore pines give this area a natural, coastal character.

Interspersed among the city-zoned properties are state-owned parcels that are retained as natural areas and that contribute to the sense of wildness that is a key to the recreational attraction of this area.



These accreted lands offer an unusual opportunity for the city to provide for new development while also retaining a sense of the natural coastal environment that presently exists. This area, if developed in a manner that establishes a distinct coastal character, can greatly contribute to the city's economic well-being while also enhancing the quality of life for residents and visitors.



Anticipated uses in the Shoreline Multi-Family District include single family dwellings, multi-family dwellings with a maximum of 10 units, parks or publicly owned recreation areas, schools and public libraries. Goals for the area are to provide for a medium density, residential neighborhood character, to provide community services and facilities that will serve the population, and to preserve, enhance, and contribute to significant environmental features and the desirable architectural theme.

This area is particularly sensitive because development will occur in the accreted lands, and therefore buildings should appear to be settled into the sand dunes, and respect the natural character of the area. The image of native vegetation, including dune grasses and coastal pines, should be continued.

Architectural style

Buildings should convey a Contemporary, northwest coast image. Natural materials should predominate and building forms should appear to be settled within the natural landscape. Imitations of historic styles are expressly discouraged in the accreted lands, where such buildings could not have existed historically. To build in historic styles in this area would therefore convey a false sense of the community's history.



DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR THE SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL RESTRICTED (R1R) DISTRICT

The older residential neighborhoods of Long Beach, which are located near the heart of town and traditionally have been single family in use, are designated as the "Single Family Residential Restricted" district. The intent of this district is to preserve, enhance, and contribute to an existing architectural design character currently present in the older homes in the R1R Zone.

Many of the older homes in this area retain their original features, which contribute to the sense of village character that these streets impart. These structures include small, one and two story houses with front porches, clad in wood siding of a variety of types. Gabled roofs are typical and garages are usually detached and subordinate to the primary dwelling. This low scale of structure, with their entrances facing the street, provides a pedestrian-friendly neighborhood character. Large lots with landscaping enhance the streets in this zone. Single family structures are permitted in this area, along with certain public structures and conditional uses.





Architectural style in the Single Family Restricted Zone

The predominant architectural styles are Beach Cottage and Cape Cod and their general characteristics should be continued in new construction. (See the descriptions on page 5.) Contemporary interpretations of Northwest Coast, Seashore or Cape Cod style homes are also appropriate. The following styles are inappropriate: A-frames, Ranch, English Tudor, Log Home, Romanesque Revival,

Mediterranean Villa Exotic, and Spanish Colonial Revival.



The guidelines that follow shall apply to residential properties in this district. Other uses will be reviewed on a case-by- case basis.



Beach cottages often have gable ends facing the street. Porches define the main entrance